The Role of a Child's Age and DSM-IV Diagnosis in Affecting Placement Disruptions and Dissolutions

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Introduction

- **Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS)**
- **Commonwealth of Kentucky**
- **Adoption in cases of abuse, neglect, and dependency**
- **=> safety**
- **Definition: disruption**
- **Definition: dissolution**

Literature Review

- **Past 20 years: changes in Adoptions**

- **More "unadoptable" children are placed**

- **Recently: more adoptions, and speeding of adoption process**

- **=> more disruptions/dissolutions**

Research Question Quantitative

- **Will an increase in age and/or the presence of a specific DSM-IV behavioral diagnosis result in an increase in adoptive placement disruptions?**
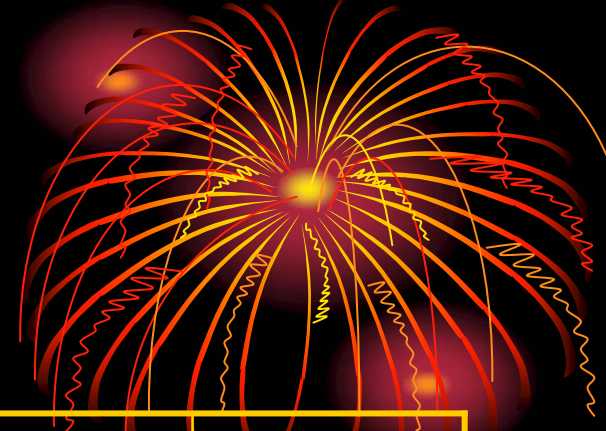
Design

- **Summative outcome evaluation**
- **Pre-experimental post-test only design**
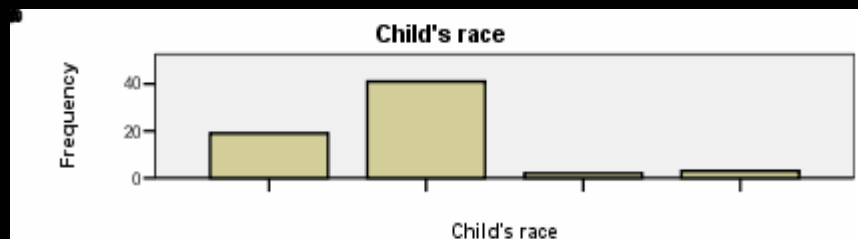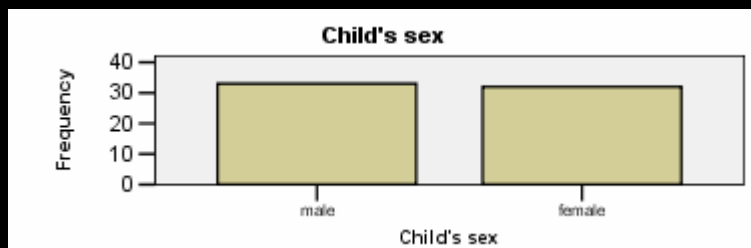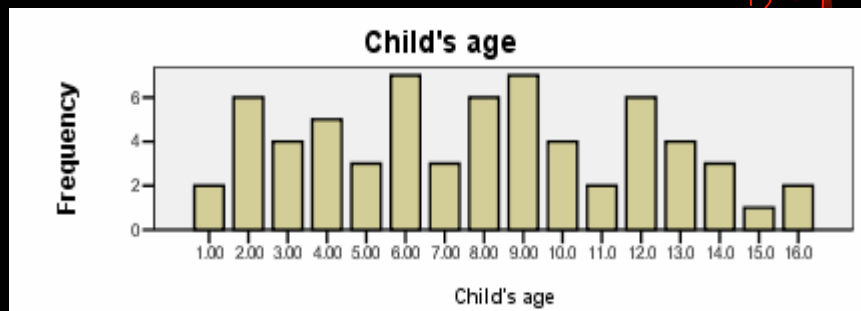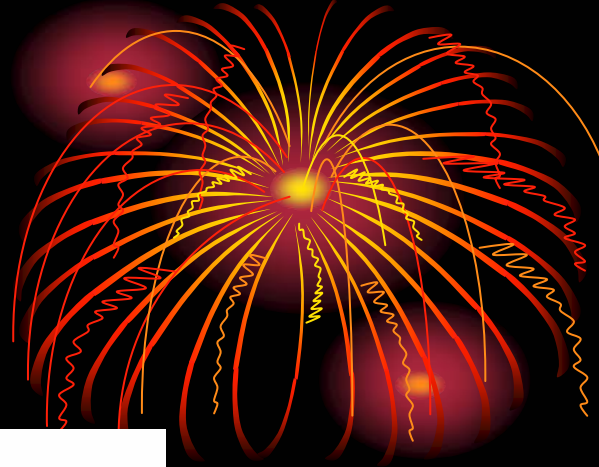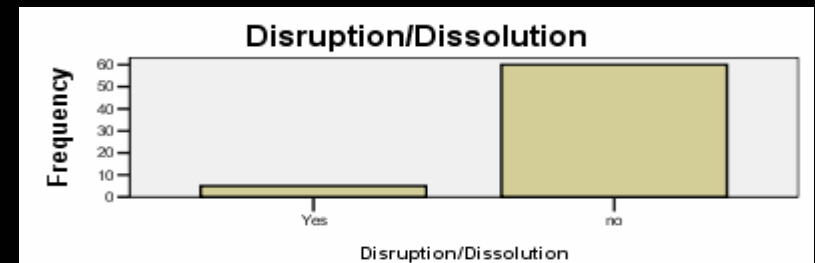- **2 (two) independent variables: age and DSM-IV behavioral diagnosis**

Sample

- **All the adoptive homes available, in which an adoption was finalized in 2001 in Jefferson County, KY.**

Frequency Table

Age	Race	Sex	Diagnosis	Reason for Rem.	Dissolution
Mean: 7.8 Range: 1-15	Male: 33 Female: 32	AA: 41 Cauc: 19 Hisp:2 Other: 3	No diagnosis: 65 ADHD: 6 Combination: 9	Neglect: 42 Physical Abuse: 10 Combination: 3	Number of diss.: 5 Still active in placement: 60

Child's age

Child's sex

Child's race

Child's DSM-IV Diagnosis

Reason for removal from home

Disruption/Dissolution
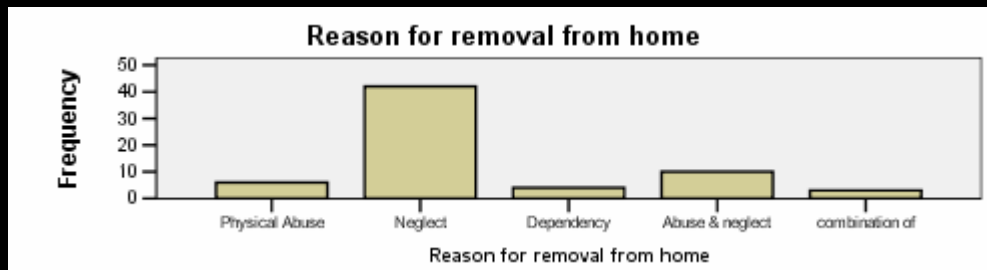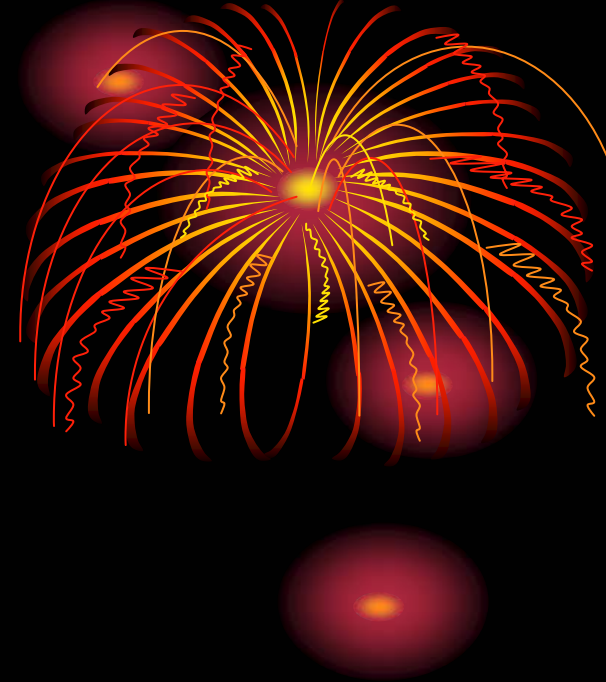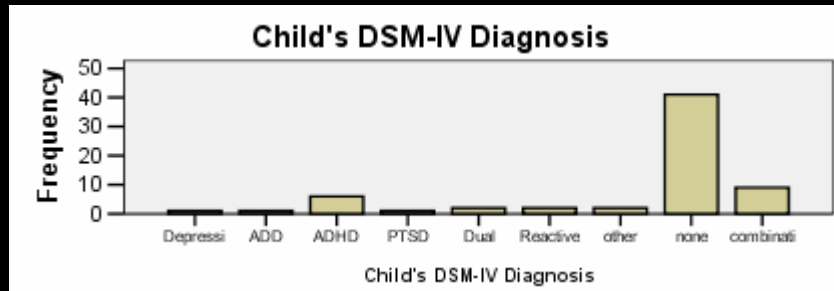
Results
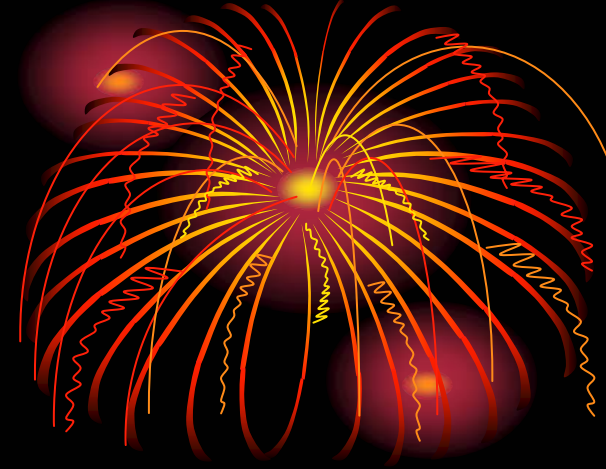
- **A Spearman Rho correlation coefficient was calculated for the relationship between a child's age and whether or not a placement dissolution occurred. An extremely weak positive correlation that was not significant was found ($r(63) = .045$, $p > .05$. A child's age is not related to whether or not a child dissolved from their post-adoptive placement.**

- **A Chi Square Fisher's Exact test was calculated examining the relationship between a child's behavioral diagnosis and whether or not a child dissolved from the post-adoptive placement. The results were not significant, ($r(63) = 4.316$, $p > .05$). A child's behavioral diagnosis is not related to whether or not a child dissolved from the post-adoptive placement.**

Discussion of the quantitative results

- **There were no significant relationships between the two independent variables (age and DSM-IV diagnosis) and the dependant variable (disruption/dissolution).**

- **More research needs to be done with a larger sample size.**

Qualitative Research Question

- **What are the contributing factors affecting adoption dissolutions?**

Qualitative Research: Methodology and Approach

- **Interviews with adoption subsidy workers on behalf of adoptive parents.**

Qualitative Research: Research Design

- **qualitative, mini-ethnography**
- **Participants: adoption subsidy workers of adoptions that were finalized during the federal fiscal 2001 year in Jefferson County, KY.**

Sample

- **Purposive sample: cases in which subsidy workers had personal and direct knowledge about.**

Interview Guide Sample

- Describe how you feel the child's age effected the disruption
- What, if any diagnosis did the child have at the time of the disruption
- Describe the services that were offered to the family and child prior to the disruption
- Describe the child's relationship with other family members in the home
- Describe what effect you feel the reason for the removal from biological parent played in child's disruption
- Describe what steps you feel could have been taken to prevent the disruption

Qualitative Facts/surprising problems:

- **9 cases**
- **4 subsidy workers, and 1 former adoption worker**
- **Most of the knowledge about the children comes from files.**
- **The workers do not know the children unless there is a problem.**

Qualitative Results/Themes

Disruption is Related to diagnosis

"He had been in And out of Residential Facilities."

"There were many Reactive Attachment Disorders."

"Adoptive mom Was not able To handle his Mental illness."

Qualitative Results/Themes

Age is related To problems In the family

"The age of Adoption does not Matter, it matters When they hit the Teenage years.

"When there is a problem with the Boys, the magic age Is 15 and the girls 13.

"Many of the Adoptive parents Forget teenagers Will be teenagers."

Qualitative Results/Themes

Additional Outcomes: Bonding in Family is limited To one person.

"She was very Bonded with her Adoptive mother, But very guarded With the others."

"Never bonded Mom, very bonded To adoptive dad."

"Gets along fairly Well with everybody, But very bonded With older Adoptive brother."

Qualitative Results/Themes

Adoptive parents Have unrealisti- Cally high expectations

"They don't realize It's forever…"

"A major cause Of the disruption Was due to the Child not being Able to meet Her expectations."

"Child could never Meet adoptive Mom's Expectations."

Discussion of qualitative Results

- **Qualitative interviews with the subsidy workers indicated that age and the presence of a DSM-IV diagnosis were factors of adoption dissolutions.**

- **Contrast to quantitative results found.**

Weaknesses of the study

- **Sample too small**;
- **Unanticipated changes in study methods; hindered the richness of information gathered**;
- **Study year may have been to recent to gather significant information**;
- **Restricted access to files.**

Strengths of the study

- **A greater knowledge about adoption dissolutions was gained by the research group.**

- **Ideas about areas needing future research were found:**

  - Research on disruptions

  - Research on strength/relationship between subsidy workers and families

Questions??

The End